

Message Text

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ACTION AF-04

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 EA-06 NEA-07 IO-06 IGA-01
SSO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INR-05 CIAE-00
DODE-00 INRE-00 PRS-01 OMB-01 TFCE-00 SP-02 L-01
H-01 /055 W

-----081544Z 116334 /53

O R 071655Z JUN 77

FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7615

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

RUTABOWMAMEMBASSY BAMAKO 0465

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY

USMISSION USUN NY

C O N F I D E N T I A L NOUAKCHOTT 1319

LIMDIS NOFORN

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (FOR TEXT AND DISTRIBUTION)

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS:NOFOR, KN, MR

SUBJECT: MAURITANIA "SUSPENDS" DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH NORTH
KOREA

REF: (A) NOUAKCHOTT 0878, (B) NOUAKCHOTT 0887

1. FOREIGN MINISTRY DIRECTOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS AMBASSADOR
MUHAMMAD OULD SIDI 'ALI CALLED ME IN LATE MORNING JUNE 7 TO
INFORM ME THAT MAURITANIAN GOVERNMENT (GIRM) HAS DECIDED TO
"SUSPEND" DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH NORTH KOREA AND TO "INVITE
NORTH KOREAN DIPLOMATS STILL IN NOUAKCHOTT TO DEPART PROMPTLY".
IN PREFACE TO HIS ANNOUNCEMENT, SIDI 'ALI STATED NORTH KOREANS
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HAD NOT YET BEEN INFORMED OF GIRM DECISION AND REQUESTED I DELAY
EVEN INFORMING DEPARTMENT OF STATE UNTIL NORTH KOREANS WERE
APPRISED OF GIRM DECISION (SLATED TO OCCUR ROUGHLY 45 MINUTES
LATER). IN EXPLANATION OF DECISION TO INFORM U.S. IN ADVANCE,
SIDI 'ALI NOTED PARTICULAR INTEREST USG HAS HAD FOR MANY YEARS
IN KOREAN PROBLEM AND POINTED TO INCREASINGLY CLOSE RELATIONSHIP
WHICH HAS BEEN EVOLVING BETWEEN U.S. AND MAURITANIA OVER PAST 15

MONTHS AND WHICH GIRM WISHES TO FOSTER.

2. IN RESPONSE TO MY DIRECT QUESTIONS, SIDI 'ALI STATED:

(A) THERE IS NO DISTINCTION IN PRACTICAL TERMS BETWEEN "SUSPENSION" AND "BREAK" IN DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS, BUT LIKE EARLIER "FREEZE", "SUSPENSION" ACCORDS MORE CLOSELY WITH TRADITIONAL DESIRE OF MAURITANIA TO BE FRIENDS WITH ALL NATIONS REGARDLESS OF PARTICULAR CHARACTERISTICS OF THEIR INTERNAL POLITICAL AND SOCIAL SYSTEMS;

(B) "DEPART PROMPTLY" MEANS PACKED AND GONE IN LESS THAN ONE WEEK;

(C) GIRM DECISION WAS PROMPTED BY NORTH KOREA'S "DELIBERATELY HOSTILE CONDUCT" TOWARD MAURITANIA. SIDI 'ALI RECALLED PYONGYANG DECISION TO RECOGNIZE SAHARA REPUBLIC LAST YEAR, BUT DECLARED THERE HAD BEEN SINCE THEN SERIES OF HOSTILE INCIDENTS. HE DECLINED PROVIDE SPECIFICS, BUT TWICE UNDERSCORED FACT GIRM HAS MORE THAN ADEQUATE BASIS FOR ITS ACTION. SIDI 'ALI NOTED THAT HE, AS GIRM REPRESENTATIVE ON POLITICAL COMMITTEE AT COLOMEO NON-ALIGNED SUMMIT, HAD PERSONALLY BEEN TARGET OF SEVERAL CLASHES PROVOKED BY NORTH KOREANS. HE THEN OBSERVED "SINCE I ASSUME YOU KEEP TRACK OF NORTH KOREANS HERE, I ASSUME YOU ARE ALSO AWARE OF DELIBERATELY HOSTILE BEHAVIOR OF NORTH KOREA DIPLOMATS IN NOUAKCHOTT". (WE ARE NOT, BUT PLAN TO PROBE DISCREETLY.)

3. COMMENT: (A) IT IS DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE GIRM DECIDING FINALLY TO MOVE AGAINST NORTH KOREA WITHOUT FIRST CONSULTING CHINESE. ONE CAN SPECULATE THAT MAURITANIANS TOLD CHINESE DURING APRIL VISIT TO PEKING THAT UNLESS DELIBERATELY HOSTILE
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BEHAVIOR CEASED, GIRM PLANNED TO MOVE AGAINST NORTH KOREANS, PERHAPS WITH THOUGHT THAT PEKING MIGHT COUNSEL PYONGYANG TO LAY OFF. THIS HYPOTHESIS SQUARES WITH FOREIGN MINISTER'S APRIL 18 ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEW POLICY TOWARD NORTH KOREA (REF A). SEVEN WEEKS LATEGN AND NO IMPROVEMENTS IN SITUATION, GIRM ACTS TO IMPLEMENT PREVIOUS DECISION IN PRINCIPLE.

(B) IF USG AND OUR SOUTH KOREAN ALLIES DESIRE TO PROFIT TO MAXIMUM FROM GIRM MOVE AGAINST NORTH KOREANS, WE WILL (Q) STUDIOUSLY REMAIN IN BACKGROUND UNTIL GIRM INFORMS WORLD IN ITS OWN WAY OF SUSPENSION DECISION OR UNTIL NEWS FILTERS OUT IN SOME OTHER WAY WITHOUT OUR HELIDI AND (2) REFRAIN COMPLETELY FROM ANY "RECOGNIZE ROK NOW" CAMPAIGN--SOFT OR HARD SELL--UNTIL DECENT INTERVAL (MINIMUM OF TWO MONTHS AFTER SUSPENSION ACTION BECOMES PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE) HAS PASSED, RECOGNIZING THAT WE HAVE ALREADY GOTTEN FROM GIRM VIRTUAL MAXIMUM WE CAN OBJECTIVELY EXPECT (PUBLIC, WRITTEN OPPOSITION TO NORTH KOREAN VIEWS, ABSENCE DURING UN VOTES, AND BREAK IN DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS) FOR FORESEEABLE FUTURE. HANDYSIDE

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